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Atlantic County

Department of Human Services

Patricia Diamond
Department Head

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Division of Public Health
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Community Health/Clinical Services
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Environmental Health
609/645-5971 FAX: 645-5923

Substance Abuse Services
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Health Planning/Information/Education
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Dennis Levinson
County Executive

May 21, 2010

The Hon. Keith Hartman,
Mayor of Galloway Township
300 E. Jimmie Leeds Rd.
Galloway, NJ 08205

RECEIVED

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GALLOWAY TWP.
MANAGER'S OFFICE
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Dear Mayor Hartman:

West Nile Virus season is once again upon us. You may be receiving calls from concerned citizens about dead birds that they have found. The State began accepting birds for testing on **April 15, 2010** and will determine an end date based on how the season progresses. The County accepts reports of dead or ill birds throughout the year for disease surveillance and to direct mosquito control efforts.

The Atlantic County Division of Public Health is submitting **CROWS AND BLUE JAYS** to the State Health Department for West Nile Virus surveillance testing. Crows and blue jays, more than any other native bird in New Jersey, are especially susceptible to West Nile Virus, and thus are good indicators of the presence of the virus in the area. A bird is considered acceptable for testing if it is not visibly decayed (not dead more than 24 hours), infested with maggots, waterlogged, hit by a car or eaten by scavengers. If you receive a call about a dead bird and it appears from the caller's information that the bird is an intact crow (large, all black bird including black eyes and feet) or a blue jay (blue with small white and black stripes, and a white belly), please contact the County Division of Public Health directly or refer the caller to us at 645-5971, ext 4277 or 4367. The hours of operation are 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday. Night, weekend and holiday calls can be directed to the County Sheriff's Dispatcher at (609) 641-0111. Specimens will be picked up on a **non-emergency basis**, typically on the same day as the call.

If your municipality opts to report these dead birds directly, it is important that we receive the name and telephone number of the caller along with an exact location of the bird since they are not always easy to find, especially at night. Advise the caller to cover the specimen with a bucket to protect it from the elements and insects. Residents may want to help by storing the specimen on ice or in refrigeration until pick-up, although they are not obligated to do so. They should use plastic gloves while handling the bird and place it in a watertight plastic bag. Specimens soaking in melted ice are not acceptable.

The Division does not provide bird disposal services. Bird carcasses for disposal, using plastic gloves or tools, should be double bagged and placed in a trash receptacle that is secured from access by children and animals.

Calls about die-offs of large numbers of other types of birds will be taken by the Division on a non-emergency basis for referral to appropriate agencies as warranted.

If you have any questions, please contact Suzanne Cavanaugh at (609) 645-5971 ext. 4277 or Jill Miles at (609) 645-5971 ext. 4367. Additional information on West Nile Virus in Atlantic County can be found by visiting the County Division of Public Health web page at www.aclink.org/publichealth. A free video about West Nile Virus, produced by the County Division of Public Health and suitable for community groups, is available by calling 609-645-7700 extension 4481.

Very truly yours,

Patricia Diamond
Department Head/Health Officer

c: Patrick Dillon, Environmental Health Coordinator
Galloway Township City Clerk



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